

**FEATURE** WEB 'GODDESS' EXPOSED  
AS SCAMMER **P.3**

**MUSIC** BEIJING BRIT ROCKERS FACE  
UPHILL BATTLE **P.5**

**FOOD** FESTIVAL TREATS YOU MIGHT  
HAVE MISSED AT HUGUOSI **P.8**

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# BEIJING TODAY

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## BACK TO THE VILLAGE

HU YANG SEES DEEP PARALLELS BETWEEN HIS VILLAGE  
AND THE LIFE OF HIS GRANDMOTHER. HIS ART CAPTURES  
COUNTRYSIDE SCENES FOR AN ONLINE MAGAZINE. **P.4**



北京青年报  
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

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# FEATURE

## 知乎

与世界分享你的知识、经验和见解



Photos by Zhihu

搜索问题、话题或人



## Zhihu 'Goddess' Tong Yao Exposed as Male Charity Scammer

BY KARENA HU

**W**ith stories about life with her sweetheart, the charming Tong Yao rose to Internet fame on Zhihu, a popular question-and-answer website.

It's not hard to guess what made her so popular with China's netizens: the graduate of Fudan University had achieved the China Dream, married her first love and ran a successful flower shop in Suzhou.

But in spite of her bursting positivity and sweet face, Tong Yao harbored a dark secret: she was the sister of "ck xiaoxiao," another fictitious Zhihu user who defrauded compassionate donors out of some 24,000 yuan thanks to her imagined battle with leukemia.

On January 13, another Zhihu user exposed Tong Yao's personal information, home address and phone number. "Tong Yao" was actually Tong Chao, a 26-year-old high school dropout.

On January 19, Tong surrendered to the Wuwei Police in Anhui province, saying he would return the money to all the donors.

### Reasons and Doubts

Tong says he never joined Zhihu expecting to engage in charity fraud. Everything started from a

coincidence.

"I was really surprised by how people responded to a story I wrote about my childhood sweetheart. It was casually written. No one noticed, but I went back and edited it to correct many misspellings," Tong said, according to the report by Paper.cn. "It took me only 30 minutes to come up with the basic story structure."

Tong Yao's origins predate her first appearance on Zhihu. Before he registered the Tong Yao account, Tong wrote as a Zhihu user named Xiao Yan, whose profile identified him as the "Boyfriend of Tong Yao who loves technology and digital products."

One day he saw a question on Zhihu where a user was asking what it was like to have a sweet girlfriend. Out of boredom, he invented up an answer. He was surprised when it became the highest-ranked reply.

With a greater framework for the character, Tong developed 10 love stories between Tong Yao and Xiao Yan set between the ages of 5 and 25. When asked why he chose to fabricate and promote these characters, and their lives, Tong attributed his actions to vanity.

"I mostly feel sorry for my parents. I ruined my reputation even

before I had the chance to achieve anything," Tong said while under police detention.

Media were quick to pounce on the question of why Internet users were so easily deceived. A similar case occurred on August 12, 2015, when a Sina Weibo user posed as a woman whose father was killed in the Tianjin explosion to snatch more than 9,000 yuan in donations. Both cases raise questions about trust mechanisms on the Chinese Internet.

Zhihu bills itself as a social knowledge sharing platform, and for a long time has courted a user base of intellectuals. That reputation has helped the site to become famous for providing valid and quality information. Few users would question the story of "ck xiaoxiao," an active user of two years.

"Internet users are like any other kind of information: they are mentally sorted by tags. Those can make it easy to fit them into a stereotype in our heads. Tong Yao sounded like a top student and flower shop owner, which most people would interpret as trustworthy," Techweb.com wrote in an editorial. A social reluctance to directly conflict with others further aids China's digital fraudsters.

Others have questioned whether social media such as Zhihu should even be able to start a donation drive. Lin Hua, a writer on Huxiu.com, said the outcome of the Tong Yao case may set the tone of China's charity industry, which has been attempting to escape a monopoly for many years.

"No matter whether it comes from laws or common sense, charity and donations are supposed to originate among the people instead of through tightly controlled official organizations," Lin said.

### Prevention Acts

Zhu Wei, associate director of the Institute of Communication Law at China University of Political Science and Law, lays the blame for charity fraud on Zhihu.

"I think Zhihu has a responsibility to confirm the validity of the content on its platform" - especially in the case of popular posts. It doesn't matter whether the platform is protected by DMCA safe harbor principles," Zhu said in his interview with *Beijing News*. Safe harbor principle refers to a section of the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) designed to shield website operators from liability for content that infringes on copyright.

"Netizens must learn not to blindly believe the words of popular bloggers," said Li Jin, a cyber police officer working with Suzhou.cc. He suggested being especially wary of all messages that encourage a user to carry out a monetary transaction.

In the meantime, the government is charging ahead with its effort to enact a real-name Internet registration system. Preliminary regulations on usernames, profiles and portraits were released by the Office of the Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs in March 2015.

As for online donations, Zhu Wei advises netizens to choose transparent agencies with legal procedures.

"There are many donation agencies not set clear rules on donation procedures. I personally suggest people donate to legal agencies and not put too much faith in what they read online," Zhu said. ■

(Karen Hu is an intern at Beijing Today.)

# MUSIC



## Secret Club Seeks Bigger Stage

BY DIAO DIAO



Photos by Secret Club

**D**irty Little Secret, now known as Secret Club, is a Beijing indie band that plays British rock. Its four-member lineup has never changed since its founding in 2012 by lead singer Xiao Wei.

The breakup of Miss Freak left Xiao Wei without an outlet to express his love of British rock. He met bassist Li Lei, who had seen one of his concerts before. Chen Yue was a member of The Urbis, and Xiaojin was a member of Little Fast Hand.

When Chen Yue and Xiaojin's bands also broke up, the four came together to keep their music alive.

At first the new band was called Dirty Little Secret. "We all liked a band called The Libertines. When they broke up, the guitarist formed a new band called Dirty Pretty Things. We wanted to be like them, so we called ourselves Dirty Little Secret," Xiao Wei said.

When the band found a following, they decided to change its name to the more positive 'Secret Club.'

Secret Club plays British rock, but not quite in the same vein as Oasis and Coldplay. The idea to make something new started when all the members were young.

Xiao Wei was a big fan of *Catcher in the Rye*, *Under Baby* and *Moyan Sanjie*. His high school classmate lent him an album by Wuliao Contingent, which inspired him to learn guitar.

Li Lei's musical interests were rather different. While his classmates were head banging to hardcore rock, Li was a fan of American country and blues. He developed that interest in a different direction when he joined his first indie rock band.

Xiao Wei's father was his first guitar teacher. "I know many indie band players have a hard time convincing their parents to support them. I know how hard it can be with all the social barriers. I feel lucky that my dad supported me, and if my children want to play music, I will support them," he said.

Li Lei and other members were not so lucky.

While Li grew up in a musical family, his parents were staunchly opposed to him performing. Li's mother, aunt and uncle studied Chinese folk music, and his uncle gave him an Erhu when he was very young.

"I only played a few days before I gave up. I didn't like Erhu, and my mother thought I had no talent for music. She was always against me playing," Li said.

His parents never lent him money for instruments, and his purchase of a guitar sparked a heated argument. At first, Li looked at music as an outlet. Eventually it became a passion.

Chen Yue has similar difficulties in convincing his parents to support him. "I think the best way to ruin your life is to listen to your parents," Chen said. "I bought my first acoustic guitar after saving for months. I had to take the guitar by bike to my friends' house whenever I wanted to practice in the winter. I suffered a lot, but it taught me to take responsibility and seize what I want."

Xiao Jin, the drummer, bought his first set of cymbals in Liulichang and carried them back to Andingmen on foot during the winter.

Today the four are known as some of the capital's better indie musicians, with interesting lyrics and strong compositions.

But that's to be expected after more than a decade of work.

Xiao Wei began writing songs when he was in middle school. One of his friends told him that composing requires real experiences, so he went to Tongzihe near Jishuitan to look for inspiration. His first song was about an old man swimming in the river during winter.

Secret Club is expanding their tour of the local club scene in 2016 and thinking more about what makes Beijing's music scene so different from the world abroad.

Xiao Wei blames it on local expectations that often thwart diversity. "[Local artists] need to find a creative way of combining Chinese music and foreign styles to command attention," Xiao Wei said.

The group is preparing for a new album release and a national tour on the festival circuit to meet their listeners around the country. ■

## LIVE SHOW ROUNDUP

*Beijing boasts one of the world's most vibrant indie music scenes. Support our local artists with a trip to one of this week's live performances!*

### The Fabulous Beijing Gigs @ DDC Club

The Fabulous Beijing Gigs invites musicians and bands from all over the world to DDC Club. This lineup includes Image Above All, Macondo, Soul Pollution and W Band, each from different countries and playing music in different styles.

🕒 February 26, 9-11:30 pm

📍 14 Shanlao Hutong, Dongcheng

💎 49 yuan (pre sale), 60 yuan (at door)

### Shake It Maschine & Mr. Pigman @ Dada Club

SIMPIG released an album earlier this year titled *Strangers*. Their music mainly leans toward footwork and juke, but with influences such as UK funk and all things hyperdub. The group's remix of Kode9's "Time Patrol" ended up on his Resident Advisor mix in 2014. The two have played different Red Bull music events in Switzerland and music festivals such as the Montreux Jazz Festival.

🕒 February 26, 9-11:30 pm

📍 206 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng

💎 Tickets sold at door

### Spring Concert @ Jianghu Bar

To welcome the coming Spring, Jianghu Bar invites Bian Yuan, Longfusi Band, Xu Fei and Huang Yuqin for a spring party. Bianyuan used to be a member in Joyside, but now he is on his own. Longfusi Band is a typical Beijing band founded in 2014. Xu Fei is a singer-song writer who used to be a nurse. Huang Yuqin has published two EP before 2014 and an album in 2015.

🕒 February 26, 9 pm

📍 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Dongcheng

💎 50 yuan (pre sale), 80 yuan (at door)



### Xu Jun @ 69 Cafe

Xu Jun is the singer of Chenianpo, an indie band from Shaanxi province. Xu was born in Xi'an and graduated from Beijing Contemporary Music Academy in 1994. He traveled around Shanxi to collect traditional sounds for his music. Today, Chenianpo is famous for being the best Shaanxi style indie band in China.

🕒 February 26, 9-11 pm

📍 109 Nanluogu Xiang, Dongcheng

💎 40 yuan



# ARTISTS



Hotpot



Waiting for Sunset

Grandma



Quilt under Sunshine

## A Hometown on Canvas

BY KARENA HU

There's no shortage of contemporary artists painting sweeping pastoral scenes of China. But Hu Yang has a sharper focus: the life of his 70-year-old grandmother who lives in a small village in Shangqiu, Henan province.

Hu said his interest in painting stems from childhood. As an introvert, he found inner peace and an escape from the outside world by sinking into his art.

His childhood experiences in Shangqiu left Hu with a deep inspiration. One time, while taking the train home, he passed a large wheat field and wondered why no one was recording the

village's beauty. He decided to create an independent publication to introduce the area to visiting tourists.

But after returning to the village, the theme of his painting had changed.

"I found that my grandmother's life was actually a miniature of my hometown. I used to think that her life might be dull because she lived on her own in the small village. My mind changed when I went home and lived with her for a while. It turns out that my grandmother's life is much more interesting than I imagined," Hu said.

Hu painted many works based on the life of his grandmother in the village. The collection, titled *My Grandmother's Days*, appears on his personal webpage. Hu asks his grandmother to add her comments on each piece.

"She writes very carefully. She likes my works," Hu said.

Among the collection are daily scenes of making dumplings, doing the laundry and dancing with other elderly residents. It's the paintings of everyday chores that make viewers feel like they are home, Hu said in an interview from Wudao, an online magazine.

Apart from his hometown collection, Hu also paints other subjects. He has won numerous awards for his work in Chinese painting, and gongbi is among his favorite techniques.

However, the theme of his works is



Town Life

rarely related to traditional culture. Hu's *Catwalk219* depicts scenes of people holding cats in a cafe, a lucid and lively image unlike traditional art. The fusion of Western themes and gongbi technique works amazingly well, transporting viewers to a relaxed world. When asked how he created such a combination, Hu attributed it to the use of light.

"The thing that makes *Catwalk219* a little different is that I use a strong contrast between cool color and warm colors. But the Gongbi technique is still the same as

other Chinese paintings. It took me a long time to find the right way to express the lighting, which was neither too strong nor too dim," Hu said.

Hu's latest collection is called *The Aviator Tony*, inspired by the world-famous children's book *The Little Prince*. Hu said Tony, whose figure is a white bear, is inspired by the experience of the author of *The Little Prince* and his disappearance in a desert when on a mission. Hu reimagines Tony as an aviator who has to land in a desert and find his way home.

"While creating this collection, the adversities Tony might have faced were always on my mind. I drew this series for myself and for people faced with difficulties in life," Hu said.

Believing that works mirrors artists' inner world, Hu said that he would love to further explore his personal feelings while finishing the Tony collection. As for his hometown collection, Hu said he is pursuing crowdfunding on Zan-shang.com.

"I consider the publication of my grandmother's life as my first try to create a whole series that introduces my hometown to others. Next I will start recording the time-honored shops in my hometown. I hope my publication will show tourists the memories of locals one day when they visit us," Hu said. ■

(Karena Hu is an intern at Beijing Today.)

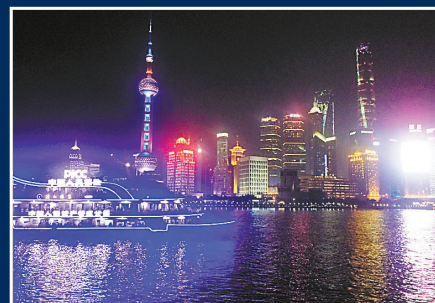


Catwalk219

artand.cn/hubadou



# A TRAVEL



Photos by Simina Mistreanu

## 43 Hours in Shanghai

BY SIMINA MISTREANU

**T**he world's most populous city packs a variety of experiences in a relatively small area. One moment you can be bustling among hordes of tourists in the mazes of the Yu Garden bazaar, and less than an hour later you can be savoring a cocktail at a rooftop bar in Pudong. Shanghai is a pedestrian-friendly city, with villa-lined streets and plenty of parks and green spaces. Here's how you can make the most out of 43 hours in the city.

### Day 1, Morning: Jing'an Temple and the French Concession

Start your trip with a visit to Shanghai's handsomest temple, Jing'an Temple. Its elegant towers made of wood with golden roofing stand out against the surrounding blue skyscrapers on West Nanjing Road. The temple has beautiful architecture and decorations. It was first established during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280), but its current incarnation was built in the 1980s. The 100 yuan entrance fee includes free incense, which visitors can burn in the main courtyard.

At the center of the temple's main yard is a tall metal shrine where visitors throw coins for good luck. The temple also features China's largest jade Buddha and a bronze bell from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).

After leaving Jing'an Temple, walk the streets of the former French concession. The leafy streets are lined with boutiques and tea houses, and also with old residences where people hang laundry to dry outside their windows in true Shanghai fashion.

### Day 1, Afternoon: Fuxing Park and Xintiandi

Have a rest at Fuxing Park, one of the city's many parks. It is a round-the-clock gathering place for Shanghainese of all ages, from children who blow soap bubbles to retirees who play cards or sing Chinese opera. At the center of the park, couples practice ballroom dance.

A few blocks away from Fuxing Park is Xintiandi, one of Shanghai's high-end commercial squares. The shopping district features cafes, restaurants and shops, which are located in restored mid-19th century *shikumen* houses on narrow alleys.

The dining options are plentiful. One of the most popular eateries is Din Tai Fung, a Taiwanese chain that serves *xiaolongbao*, the famous Shanghainese soup dumplings. The Xintiandi branch is often crowded and



might require a wait, but its dumplings are delicious – if not a bit costly at 40 to 60 yuan for a set of five.

### Day 1, Evening: The Bund

Probably the most famous spot in Shanghai, the Bund is worth a visit. The waterfront area along Huangpu River is where you can see the iconic skyline of Shanghai's business district, Pudong. Amble along the waterfront, and then toast the

city at M on the Bund, located in one of the 1920s-era buildings by the riverfront.

### Day 2, Morning: Shanghai Museum

The Shanghai Museum is considered one of the best museums in China. Located in the People's Square, the museum hosts ancient collections of bronze, sculptures, paintings, ceramics and jades as well as more modern collections of furniture and ethnic clothing. The entrance to the museum is free, and the waiting lines are often long. That said, the collections are worth it. But don't aim to see everything on one visit; instead, choose one or two exhibits and take your time.

### Day 2, Afternoon: Nanjing Street and Yu Garden

After taking in all that art and history, walk over to Nanjing Road Pedestrian Street, a large commercial artery adjoining the Bund, for a meal. But the most interesting restaurants are located on the smaller side streets. Wander away, and you might run into a quaint sushi bar located in a train car.

From there, walk south to Yu Garden. This exquisite imperial garden ruined its founder, Ming-era governor Pan Yunduan. Today, the garden is located within an extensive bazaar, which is overtaken by tourists, especially around national holidays. Although it can feel overwhelming, finding your way through the labyrinthine streets among thousands of Chinese visitors is an interesting experience. To make it easier on yourself, it's good to know that you should take entrance 2 to reach Yu Garden, and that the last tickets are sold at 4:45 pm.

### Day 2, Evening: Pudong

From Yu Garden, take the subway two stations across the river to Pudong, Shanghai's gleaming business district. You can go up on the Oriental Pearl Tower for 160 yuan per person. Alternatively, you can enjoy a cocktail at Flair Rooftop, a bar located on the 58th floor of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, which offers a magnificent view of Shanghai including the Oriental Pearl Tower. ■







# ENTERTAINMENT



## New Monkey King Movie for Monkey Year

BY DIAO DIAO



**T**he Chinese lunar calendar assigns each year to a totem animal, and each year the film industry's top marketers scramble to produce something designed to

match up.

2016 is the year of the monkey, and it's not difficult to imagine which character they will turn to again.

*The Monkey King 2* is the latest movie featuring the classic character from *Journey to the West*. The story is based on one of the most famous chapters, "The Fight with the Skeleton Demon," and it expands it a bit for the film.

In the novel, the skeleton demon can change into anything. In order to capture the monk and eat his meat to live forever, the demon changes into an old man to win his sympathy. The monkey king, with his power to see through any disguise, steps in and kills the old man even as the monk lambasts him for the effort.

The skeleton demon returns in the form of an old woman, and the monkey

king kills her. The demon returns again as a little girl, and the monkey king kills her again. The brutality is too much for the monk to bear, and he finally abandons his apprentice.

When the demon returns a fourth time to capture the monk, Buddha has to seek out the monkey king and persuade him to return and save his master.

The movie expands on the popular story with humorous elements and some excellent performances by the actors and actresses.

The monk is played by Feng Shaofeng, an actor famous for his grave expressions and portrayals of heroic characters.

Hong Kong actor Aaron Kwok stars as the monkey king. The former superstar is hidden behind a mask and fake teeth, making him almost unrecognizable to viewers. Commenters on Douban noted Guo's acting was much better than they expected.

The other two apprentices, Zhu Bajie and Sha Wujing, are played by Xiao Shenyang, a comedian from Shenyang, Liaoning who rose to fame with an appearance on the 2009 Spring Festival Gala, and Him Law, a young Hong Kong actor.

The movie's main selling point, however, is the skeleton demon portrayed by Gong Li. Her make-up, dress and her facial expressions are vivid and fit the creepy character. Although the acting and story are obviously exaggerated, Gong's personal characteristics shine through.

The movie also invited Fei Xiang, a Taiwan singer from the 1970s, to play the emperor, and Hong Kong actress and singer Kelly Chen to play Buddha.

There have been numerous attempts to adapt the monkey king for the big screen, but few have been as well received as the 1986 TV series.

While it's highly unlikely *The Monkey King 2* will fare any better, it makes a noble attempt with modern special effects and a reasonable revision of the story. ■

## Zhang Defen Teaches How to Make Wishes Come True

BY DIAO DIAO

**D**reams don't only come true in fairytales. Zhang Defen, the first Chinese "chicken soup" writer from Taiwan, teaches readers about the magic needed to make any dream into reality.

Zhang graduated from Taiwan University with a degree in Business Management. She worked as a reporter and broadcaster for several years before pursuing a Master's of Business Administration degree at UCLA.

In 2002, Zhang was inspired by psychological experts and quit her well-paid job to study yoga and psychology for six years. She learned many ther-

apies for psychological treatment and some tips for self-improvement. Zhang read more than a hundred books about yoga and psychology and focused on the revolution and improvement of human consciousness.

*You Who Make All Dreams Come True* is Zhang's book of theories and anecdotes published in 2008.

In a mysterious country – far, far away – all people live happily and have everything they want. The princess knows that the country has a secret of making all wishes come true and said she will marry anyone who finds the secret and brings it back. Anan is one of

the determined suitors.

On Anan's journey, he witnesses the death of his friends, meets the empress of a mysterious country and – by accident – gets the chance to study in a mysterious school where people learn how to make all wishes come true.

But the more Anan learns, the more he discovers. Anan finds that the real way to make wishes come true is far more complicated than he was taught.

As well as *You Who Make All Dreams Come True*, Zhang also has other psychology books that give readers a better understanding of themselves and their relationships with others. ■



Photos by douban.com

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# Q CLASSIFIEDS

## NIGHTLIFE



### Space/Play Committee presents Marco Shuttle

Marco Shuttle has a brand of cinematic techno that is unusually organic and textural, building pressure in subtle ways and transporting listeners to lush, alien landscapes. His eclectic and cerebral sound takes cues from jazz and musique concrete as much as it does from acid house and Detroit techno. With a background in fashion, one can even sense the flows and forms of this world creeping into Shuttle's tangle and detailed music.

Over the last few years Marco Shuttle has become a firm favorite amongst techno heads around the world, with releases on The Bunker New York and Peter Van Hoesen's untouchable Time to Express. He also managed his own record label, Eerie, which has been an outlet for his own productions, and has released records from Anxur, Shuttle's collaboration with Donato Dozzy.

Apart from the studio world, Shuttle has proven himself to be an expert technician in the DJ booth. With more than 15 years of experience behind the decks, he's found himself transporting dance floors around the world, from fabric in London to Berlin's Berghain to the Labyrinth Festival in Japan.

- Dada Bar, Unit 101, Bldg B, 206 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng (near Temple Bar)
- 💎 60 yuan
- 🕒 10 pm - midnight, March 4

### POP CITY INC. VS BVE BVE DISCO VS FUNK FEVER



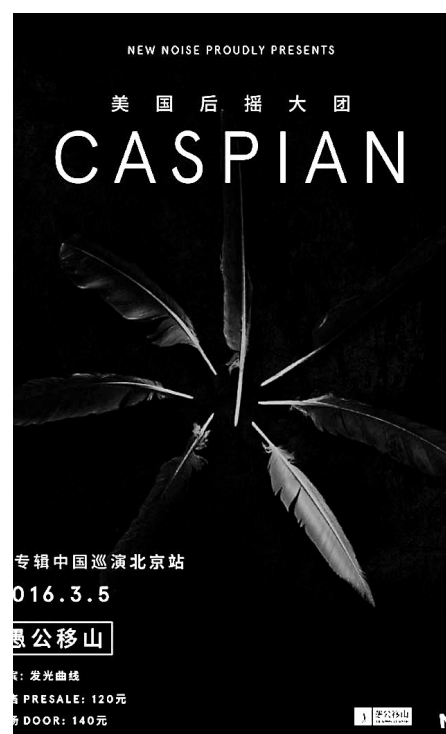
### Kung Fu: Streetfighter Edition

Kung Fu pits three of Beijing's best Funk and Disco DJs - Demone, Watermelon and Bite-Size Buddha - against some proper House heads - Special K and special guest Ben Huang - setting the scene for an intense musical showdown at The Bar at Migas.

No matter what happens, the dance floor will surely win as both sides fire off bumping heat with reckless abandon, so come on up and get your kung fu on!

- The Bar at Migas, 6F, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang
- 💎 30 yuan
- 🕒 10 pm - 4:30 am, March 4

## MUSIC



### CASPIAN 2016 China Tour

New Noise is very proud to kick off 2016 with an eight-date China tour for American instrumentalists Caspian presenting their new magnum opus *Dust and Quiet*. Ranking at the top of every Best of 2015 list, their new album cements the band as stand-alone leaders of progressive, engaging and thoroughly thought-provoking music.

Caspian transcends post-rock norms to create a phenomenal record that is in a league all of its own. It's emotive, well-written and utterly enthralling.

Throughout their 12 years of existence, Massachusetts' Caspian has been becoming a juggernaut in the post-rock scene. With the genre, like all genres at some point or another, becoming oversaturated with derivative acts, bands like Caspian succeed in breathing new life into the scene and offer new perspectives. Watching a Caspian show is an experience that surpasses the grasp of every adjective in literature that would try to define it, their music has the intensity of thunder, touch of a feather and the warmth of home.

- Yugong Yishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng (100m west of Zhangzizhong Lu subway station)
- 💎 120-140 yuan
- 🕒 8:30 - 10:30 pm, March 5



### Free-V. Music Gig

For this gig, we want to promote an idea of music and everything else not being free anymore. But why is it called free gig? Because here, free is a verb! If music is not free anymore, there will be more freedom for artists to live and make it.

Even in China, it's becoming less free to listen to or download music on the Internet. Streaming sits are pockmarked with lost songs, and many Youku videos require users to pay. But that's actually a step forward - especially for music, as artists have more possibilities to support themselves. All the bands, artists, designers, labels signed up for this gig are working for free to promote an idea that is not free.

- DDC, 14 Shanlao Hutong, Dongcheng
- 💎 40-50 yuan
- 🕒 8:30 - midnight, February 25

## ART



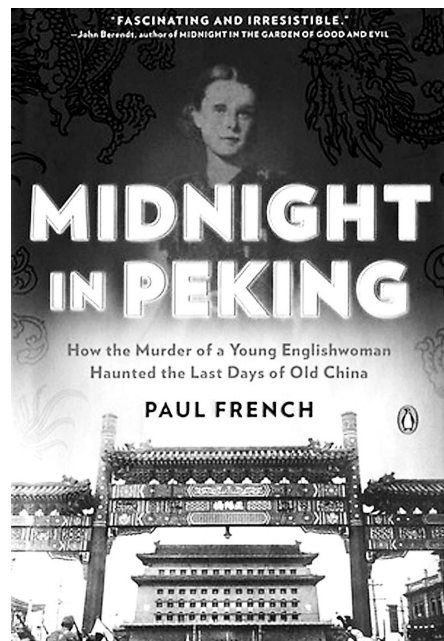
### Versailles

Versailles is one of the most important palaces in France. Located near Paris, it was the Sun King's (Louis XIV) residency. Discover the routine of Louis XIV, the first levee in Kings' bedroom, the wardrobe and fashion at the king's court, promenade in a French garden with a French architect and the party in the hall of mirrors to impress visitors.

Discover the symmetry of French gardens, hat fashions in culture and classical French architecture through this workshop of drawings, paintings and models.

- Where: Atelier, Room 202, Building C, Jinxiu Yuan, Xingfucun Zhong Lu Chaoyang
- 💎 1,500 yuan
- 🕒 10 am-4:00 pm, February 29-March 4

## BOOK



### The Emperor Far Away: Book Talk with David Eimer

David Eimer is the author of *The Emperor Far Away: Travels at the Edge of China*, a travelogue that explores modern-day China along with its history and culture. Eimer first visited China in 1988, and has since visited almost every province and written extensively for *Lonely Planet*. He lived in Beijing from 2005-2012, where he was the China correspondent for the *Sunday Telegraph* and a columnist and feature writer for the *South China Morning Post*. Traveling through the Islamic areas of Xinjiang province, into Tibet and across Route 219, which runs the rough boundary shared with India, the only disputed frontier in China, Eimer exposes the country's inner conflicts.

- The Bookworm, Courtyard 4, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang
- 💎 40/50 yuan
- 🕒 7:30-9 pm, March 1.

## COMMUNITY



### Paddy O Sightseeing Club

This Murder Mystery Walk is based on the novel *Midnight in Peking* by Paul French. It's an eye-opening trip through some old hutongs and the Tartar wall by Beijing Railway Station. A 19-year-old British girl (the former consul's daughter) was murdered and her body left under the Fox Tower in January 1937. You will be given a full list of facts, case notes, suspects and an appraisal of the evidence.

- Sofitel Wanda, Tower C, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang
- 🕒 6:30 pm-4:30 am, March 5



# FOODS



Photo by prnasia.com

## Finding Tradition in Beijing Snacks

BY WANG YAN



Photo by douguo.com



Photo by ahxg888.com



Photo by nicpic

**S**pring Festival makes Chinese people nostalgic. It is the time of the year that everyone starts to talk about tradition and makes an honest attempt to rediscover what is quintessentially Chinese.

But after eating dumplings, lighting fireworks and visiting temple fairs, exploring traditional snacks has become another popular way to traverse back through China's muddy and fractured history.

Beijing snacks are special. They have their roots in folk tradition, but are the product of years of refinement by royal families. During the Yuan Dynasty, Mongolians brought the nomadic diet to Beijing. Historical records show that during the Yuan Dynasty, Dadu (Beijing) had many food stands that sold Mongolian milk tea. Some also believe that Beijing hotpot developed during the Mongolian occupation.

Ethnic integration was prominent in the Yuan era, and some historians believe the Hui ethnic group first took shape during that time. Mongolian emperors had loose policies towards different ethnicities, and thus Hui people thrived in the capital. Their presence left its marks on Beijing snacks, explaining why many Beijing snacks are halal food.

Other than Yuan Dynasty, emperors of Qing Dynasty also influenced modern Beijing snacks. Beijing-born writer Xiao Fuxing once said that most Beijing snacks were developed by the Manchu People, including *jiaoquan* (fried rings), *wandou huang* (pea cakes) and *xiaowotou* (steamed corn buns).

*Jiaoquan* is a household snack in Beijing. It resembles a yellow bangle. Local Beijingers love *jiaoquan* and usually have it for breakfast with *douzhi*, a kind of fermented bean juice. To make good *jiaoquan*, one must pay attention to what wheat they use. It is said the Zhangjiakou wheat is the best choice as the wheat is red and can make for the crispy taste. Mixing edible alkali into the wheat is also suggested.

As a traditional folk snack, *wandou huang* was introduced to the Qing Court where it was favored by the Empress Dowager Cixi. Its main ingredient is fine peas, so it is a seasonal snack available only in spring. The best *wandou huang* is smooth and melts in your mouth.

*Xiaowotou* was a cheap food for poor people, but legend said it later made into the Qing Court. According to the legend, during Empress Dowager Cixi's flight to Xi'an from the Battle of Peking when the Eight-Nation Alliance invaded China, Cixi was given a bunch of corn buns to satiate her hunger. After her return to Beijing she ordered the imperial cooks to make it again for her and the chef used more refined ingredients to create the golden colored *wotou* bun, which became one of the Imperial dishes.

Beijing snacks are also reflections of local customs. People choose their food in accordance with customs and solar terms. For example, Chinese people believe you should eat *chunbing* on Lichun, the start of Spring. And on the eighth day of the 12th lunar month, people should eat *labazhou*, a rice porridge with nuts.

People say foods reflect culture. And perhaps that is why many keep the habit of eating traditional snacks. To many people it brings back the childhood flavor or memories of youth. But in China, with its long history of rule by various ethnic groups, what those traditions represent may be hard to gauge. ■

## Huguosi Xiaochi

BY WANG YAN

**H**uguosi Xiaochi is one of the most famous snack chains in Beijing. Founded in 1956 by the Chinese government, the restaurant has been operating for more than 50 years. But its real origins date back to ancient China.

The tradition of Huguosi Xiaochi started from Huguosi Temple Fair. According to historical records, Huguosi Temple was built in Yuan dynasty. On every eighth day of the lunar month, street vendors would converge on the temple to sell small treats, including *ludagun* (rolling donkeys), *wandou huang* (pea cakes) and *aiwowo* (steamed corn buns).

Huguosi Xiaochi preserves the tradition of that temple fair and is famous for its traditional Beijing snacks. Along with the snacks, it also serves braised oxtail, tasimi and other Halal snacks.

The restaurant is very famous in Beijing, and customers often have to wait in line to order. The menu consists mostly of sweet pastries, traditional Beijing snacks, porridge and tea.

Huguosi Xiaochi has more than 30 branch stores in Beijing and is easy to find. The food is well-known for its affordability, with some desserts priced as little as 2 yuan. If you missed out on Beijing traditional snacks during the Spring Festival, Huguosi Xiaochi offers a place where you can find them year-round. ■



Photos by dianping.com

## MAKE YOUR OWN WITH THIS RECIPE

### Learn to Make Lüdagun (Rolling Donkey)

BY WANG YAN

**L**üdagun is one of the oldest and most famous snacks in Beijing and Tianjin. Many Beijing snack stores sell them. This recipe can help you cook the delicious snacks on your own.

#### Ingredients:

- ☐ 150g sticky rice flour
- ☐ 150g water
- ☐ sweetened bean paste
- ☐ soybean flour



Photo by quanjudu.com

#### The Steps:

1. Mix the sticky rice flour and water in a bowl. Stir evenly to form a paste.
2. Cover the bowl with thin paper and microwave the mixture for 3-5 minutes. Oil your hands, remove the paste and lay it out on the table.
3. Heat up a wok and add the soybean flour. Stir-fry for 3 minutes.
4. Place some of the soybean flour on the table and on the paste. Use rolling pin to roll it into a square shape and place the sweetened bean paste on top.
5. Roll up the sheet and brush with more cooked soybean flour.
6. Cut the roll into 3-5cm sections before serving.

### Huguosi Xiaochi

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